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NAEB - President's Memo*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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TO THE RAMPARTS! *16*

A NEW CHALLENGE TO ETV

About the time this reaches you the FCC will institute a rule-making proceeding which may well have as important implications for the future of ETV as the Sixth Order and Report. It is the new plan for UHF channel allocations and criteria for assignments for commercial and non-commercial broadcasting.

Within the past three years, the FCC has evinced a growing interest in educational broadcasting and has been persuaded that its services should be extended and given priority in the revised UHF table of assignments.

In 1960 ^{*The Commission*} ~~it~~ suggested that the NAEB come up with a national plan for ETV allocations in the next decade. The result was the survey of the Needs of Education for TV ^{*Channel Allocations.*} ~~Frequencies~~. This plan, ^{*supplemented and*} modified by state plans* subsequently submitted, plus some individual requests formed the basis of the new pattern which the FCC staff is developing for allocating a large number of new UHF channels. This plan has been developed manually, but shortly the NAEB-FCC digital computer study will be completed and these data

*It should be noted that initial state plans rarely embody provision for total long-range needs; they usually develop in terms of present day political imperatives and immediately available resources.

2. More than one unreserved channel in cities of 50,000 or more population in accordance with the following:

50,000	to	150,000	3 channels
150,000	to	500,000	5 channels
500,000	to	2,000,000	7 channels
2,000,000	to	5,000,000	9 channels
over		5,000,000	11 channels

^{Existing} VHF channel assignments were counted toward meeting the above objectives.

Under this plan, of the FCC staff, it is proposed that the minimum request of educators for one-station national coverage, as called for in the NAEB Survey, is largely satisfied. In every community of 10,000 or more, which does not now have a channel, it is proposed that an assignment be made.

The Educational Gap in the New Plan

In the question of multiple channel assignments for education, there is a vast deficiency in the FCC staff proposal in relation to indicated needs for the future. The FCC is willing to assign two channels in 40 metropolitan areas; the NAEB study calls for multiple channels in 151 communities, and not just two channels; three, four, as many as six channels, to meet the projected requirements for expanded educational service. The FCC staff attitude is that, granted there may be expanding educational needs in large communities which can be served by TV, these needs should not be met by utilizing broadcasting facilities. Use of standard broadcast frequencies exclusively for formal instruction or in-school service is in its view, not a proper allocation of this public resource. What is essentially point-to-

point communication for the benefit of pre-selected minority audiences can be more appropriately conducted, says the FCC staff, via other kinds of distribution systems.

Importance to Education

Whatever plan is finally adopted at the conclusion of the hearings (the whole rule-making procedure will run about six months) will condition the pattern of UHF and, thus, educational, TV (since its growth must be in this band) for at least the next decade.

Educators and representatives of communities where educational facilities exist or are planned will need to examine the new plan carefully to see if their needs have been fully taken into account for the provision of one, two, or more assignments. In particular, they will need to decide whether the FCC has been too conservative in providing no more than two ETV assignments in any location.

Assessment of the Task

The FCC staff is predisposed to place the highest priority on the allocation of one educational reservation in every good-sized community. It is not disposed to make second channel reservations until the 'requirements' for three network outlets and at least one independent commercial station in metropolitan areas are satisfied. Moreover, the FCC staff does not intend that second-channel assignments in the 40 designated communities are to be used primarily for point-to-point, in-school television. It wants to develop the 2000 mc band for such 'supplementary' service.

This means that if we are to have multiple reservations for education we must persuade the Commission that education has needs for multiple channels--needs that can be efficiently met only by use of standard television broadcast facilities. Further, it means that in addition to the need for multiple channels to accommodate complex schedules and increasing numbers of courses for in-school use, there ^{also} must be an impressive documentation of the needs for providing a broad, community-wide service via broadcast television. ^P A very strong case must be organized to show the vital importance of educational broadcast facilities in coping with the mounting pressures upon our exploding metropolitan complexes; the needs of education to adjust to new patterns in urban-suburban living, requiring formal, systematic instruction off-campus and in the home; the need to rehabilitate the retarded and physically and psychologically handicapped; the need for training highly skilled manpower to meet the demands of increasingly complex industrial developments; the need to re-educate workers displaced by automation; and the need to afford citizens sustained and continuing opportunities for life-long education. In these and in many more ways TV broadcasting can be used for broadening educational opportunity to serve the entire community, its schools and colleges, business and industry, homes and churches, civic and cultural groups, and its governmental agencies.

Action Program

NAEB in cooperation with other members of JCEB is alerting local and

national groups about this proceeding and urging them to prepare accordingly. NEA held a national conference of outstanding leaders in education, government, labor, industry to discuss this matter (June 20th). NAEB, using the same ^{data} ~~data~~ which the FCC staff will have from our computer study, but employing different criteria, will prepare its own national allocations plan. Many organizations are planning to file written comments and, if efforts to procure an oral hearing are successful, they will have representatives testify. Of particular importance will be filings from all communities where there are indications of need for multiple reservations.

As soon as the FCC plan is announced we urge all of you to give it close study to determine whether it satisfies the needs of your community for its ETV potential and then prepare to act accordingly.

Finally, this is the time for a Thomas Jefferson to step forward. We need a new Declaration of the true public interest in Broadcasting; a stirring assertion of values in the allocation of precious resources couched in terms so logical and lucid 'as to compel acceptance.' Now is the time for the definitive statement of the imperative need for our society to secure for its own benefit adequate means for maximizing the extension of educational and cultural opportunities to all.

Unless such provision is made now in the allocation and reservation of frequencies for non-commercial use, television may never be projected into the full usefulness of which it is capable in the service of education and our society.

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